

Since last August, more than 300,000 of America's young immigrants have [emerged from the shadows](#) to apply for a new program that provides temporary protection from deportation.

The program, known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, asserted by the President because Congress would not act, has strict eligibility rules. It is open only to immigrants who were brought into this country as children, who have grown into law-abiding adults, and who have worked hard to better themselves through education or military service.

By offering a legally recognized status to these immigrants, many of whom have never known any other home than America, the Childhood Arrivals program has made our immigration system more humane and just. This partial solution reminds us how much more remains to be done to create an immigration system that benefits our society and our economy at large and treats individuals and families humanely and justly.

I expect that one of the major issues of the early 113th Congress will be the consideration of more comprehensive immigration legislation. To guide this process, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and the Congressional Progressive Caucus have set forth [nine principles for immigration reform](#).

The principles call for requiring undocumented immigrants to register with the federal government, submit to a background check, learn English and American civics, and pay taxes. In return, these new Americans would earn a path to permanent residency and eventual citizenship. The principles also emphasize the importance of attracting highly educated immigrants, protecting the border, and ending the exploitation of immigrant workers.

These principles are sensible, straightforward ideas that should guide America's conversation about immigration reform in the new year.

Not Just Rain and Wind

You may know that you can apply for federal disaster assistance to help pay the costs of repairing damage done to your home by Hurricane Sandy. But did you know that disaster grants may also help cover indirect costs of the storm?

The Genealogical Society of New Jersey, for instance, is a Trenton-based nonprofit that was scheduled to hold its annual public meeting and lecture on November 10, just days after Sandy struck New Jersey. The society was forced to postpone its meeting, requiring the re-printing and re-mailing of all of the associated flyers and publicity announcements. Total costs ran up to \$850 – a meaningful amount of money for a small organization.

Fortunately, the Genealogical Society applied for and received a grant to cover its losses from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities. The grant was one of several provided from a larger, \$30,000 fund that the New Jersey Council secured with my support after the storm.

To be clear, not all indirect hurricane damages will be covered by grants or disaster aid, but the Genealogical Society's story shows how a dedicated organization can recover even losses that weren't the direct result of rain or wind.

If you or your organization suffered direct or indirect damage from Hurricane Sandy, the first step is to apply for FEMA disaster relief by visiting DisasterAssistance.gov . If FEMA aid does not fully cover your costs, please contact me at holt.house.gov/contact or 1-87-RUSH-HOLT (1-877-874-4658), and I would be glad to help you determine how you might pursue additional aid.

Remain On Guard for Disaster Relief Scams

In the aftermath of a natural disaster, scam artists too often attempt to prey on disaster victims. FEMA is warning of several particularly common scams:

Home Repair Scams - Unregistered home improvement contractors may take your money and disappear, leaving unfinished work and unsafe homes. Before hiring a contractor, you should check with the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs at 1-800-242-5846 to make sure the contractor is registered.

Identity Theft - Scam artists may pretend to be employed by FEMA, the Small Business Administration (SBA), or other government agencies and try to obtain personal information such as Social Security and bank account numbers. Please bear in mind that all authorized FEMA or SBA personnel display a laminated photo identification card, which they are required to wear at all times.

Charity Scams – Before donating, you should investigate to be sure the organization asking for donations is registered to solicit in New Jersey and ask how the money will be used.

Further information about protecting yourself from these and other scams is [available online](#) .

Sincerely,

Rush Holt
Member of Congress